

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1916

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 115

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER

CIA WASHDC

COMSIXTHFLT

COMPHIBRON SIX

COM THREE FOUR MAU

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

DIA WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7759

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION SEPTEMBER 29

REF: BEIRUT 7727

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1. SUMMARY. SYRIANS AND CHRISTIANS CONTINUE BROAD AND

RAPID OFFENSIVE AGAINST PALESTINIANS IN METN. PALESTINIANS HOLDING SANNINE AND ZAROUR BUT LOSING HEAVILY ELSEWHERE. ARAFAT APPEALS TO ARAB STATES FOR IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION. THERE IS INCREASING EVIDENCE PALESTINIANS WILL WITHDRAW FROM MOUNTAINS. SARKIS MAINTAINS PUBLIC SILENCE ON MOUNTAIN OFFENSIVE AND CONTINUES POLITICAL CONTACTS. NATIONAL MOVEMENT CJ LS ON SARKIS TO DEMONSTRATE HE IS "PRESIDENT OF ALL" BY DEMANDING SYRIAN RETREAT. SUPREME ISLAMIC COUNCIL SCHEDULED MEET WITH HASAN SABRI KHOLI. GROUND SITUATION OUTSIDE MOUNTAINS VERY TENSE BUT STEGLE. END SUMMARY.

2. FIGHTING IN THE MOUNTAINS. SYRIAN/RIGHTIST OFFENSIVE AGAINST PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST POSITIONS IN METN BEING CONDUCTED IN THREE MAJOR AREAS: FALUGHA/QURNAYIL; BWAYRIJ/KFAR SILWAN; AND HAZZIRTA/ TARSHISH. WE UNDERSTAND BASIC ROLE OF CHRISTIANS WAS TO CUT OFF ZAROUR FROM AINTOURA AND TAKE MTEIN, HOWEVER ONE REPORT INDICATES THAT SYRIANS MAY HAVE ALREADY TAKEN BOTH MTEIN AND AINTOURA ALONG WITH TARSHISH, HAZZIRTA, KFAR SILWAN, MAJDAL TARSHISH, AYN AS-SIHHA, KNESSET AND TOUITA. THEY ARE ALSO REPORTEDLY IN POSITION TO CUT OFF HAMANA, FLAUGH AND QURNAYIL. RADIO AMCHIT CLAIMS FIERCE BATTLE ON SOFAR/ALEY AXIS. PALESTINIANS CLAIM ENTIRE FIFTH DIVISION OF SYRIAN ARMY NOW IN LEBANON. SYRIAN MIG 21'S IN USE FOR RECONNAISSANCE AND POSSIBLY STRAFING.

3. ARAFAT SOS. YASIR ARAFAT HAS APPEALED TO ARAB LEAGUE AND ARAB HEADS OF STATE FOR "IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION" TO STOP SYRIAN ATTACK. FATHER YOUAKIM MOBARAK CARRIED ARAFAT MESSAGE TO SARKIS FOLLOWING MEETING OF PALESTINIAN LEADERS. NO RESPONSE PUBLISHED, BUT L'ORIENT-LE JOUR QUOTES INFORMED SOURCES THAT SARKIS SEEKING OBTAIN CEASE-FIRE.

4. SARKIS MEETINGS. SARKIS MAINTAINS PUBLIC SILENCE ON SYRIAN OFFENSIVE. PRESIDENT MET PIERRE GEMAYEL SEP 28 AT BAABDA WHERE GEMAYEL ADVISED SARKIS, "NOT TO GO ON IF IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN A STRIKE FORCE CAPABLE OF RETURNING PEACE TO THE COUNTRY."
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GEMAYEL REITERATED HIS DESIRE FOR FRENCH PEACE FORCE, "ON CONDITION ALL LEBANESE PARTIES AGREE." SARKIS ALSO MET SEP 28 WITH DEPUTY SLEIMAN ALI, A POTENTIAL PRIME MINISTER, WHO LATER SAID PRIVATELY THAT HE ADVISED PRESIDENT THAT SYRIAN OPERATIONS IN MOUNTAINS AND IN SOUTH LEBANON WERE ESSENTIAL TO ESTABLISH LEBANESE UNITY AND URGED SARKIS TO FORGET ABOUT PEACE INITIATIVES FOR TIME BEING. RELIGIOUS LEADERS, INCLUDING MARONITE

PATRIARCH, ALSO SAW SARKIS. ALEXANDER GEMAYEL
SCHEDULED MEET SARKIS SEP 29. AN NAHAR SAYS FATAH
CHIEF OF SECURITY ABU HASSAN WILL MEET SARKIS SEP 29
AT MUSEUM IF SECURITY PERMITS. RADIO AMCHIT SAYS UNNAMED
SPECIAL SARKIS ENVOY WILL LEAVE SOON FOR WASHINGTON.

5. NATIONAL MOVEMENT. LEADERS OF NATIONALMOVEMENT
MET SEP 28 IN ABSENCE KAMAL JUNBLATT WHO IS IN CAIRO.
COMMUNIQUE CALLED ON SARKIS TO STOP SYRIAN OFFENSIVE
AND DEMAND RETREAT OF SYRIAN FORCES, SAYING, "SARKIS
IS EITHER PRESIDENT OF ALL OR ONLY THE PRESIDENT OF
THE ISOLATIONIST FACTION."

6. ISLAMIC COUNCIL MEETS. SUPREME ISLAMIC COUNCIL
MET SEP 28 AND SCHEDULED MEET SEP 29 WITH HASAN SABRI
KHOLI TO REVIEW MILITARY SITUATION IN METN. COUNCIL
ISSUED SEP 28 STATEMENT OF SURPRISE OVER "BRUSK
DETERIORATION OF SITUATION IN THE MOUNTAINS" AND
APPEALED TO ARAB LEADERS TO HASTEN MINI-SUMMIT ON
LEBANON. COUNCIL MEMBERS RASHID KARAME AND SAEB
SALAM SAID IN CONTACT WITH SARKIS, ARAFAT AND PIERRE
GEMAYEL WITH REGARD SYRIAN MILITARY OFFENSIVE.

7. GROUND SITUATION ELSEWHERE. SITUATION VERY TENSE
THROUGHOUT COUNTRY BUT LITTLE GROUND ACTIVITY
REPORTED OUTSIDE MOUNTAIN BATTLE AREAS. TRIPOLI AREA
ACTIVE WITH SMALL-SCALE CLASHES AND CONTINUATION OF
BOMBARDMENTS. CLASHES REPORTED ON BEIRUT CONFRONTATION
LINE AND AT CHIYAH/AIN EL-RUMMANEH, HADETH/LAYLAKI AND
SURROUNDING AREAS. PRESS CARRIES REPORTS OF UNIDENTIFIED
EXPLOSIONS IN SIDON AND AT JEZZINE/ROUM. AL MOHARRIR
CARRIES DOUBTFUL REPORT OF "HUGH SYRIAN AND JORDANIAN
CONCENTRATIONS" IN JEZZINE AREA.
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